

UNDERSTANDING AND LIVING WITH AIDS



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The Illustrations and contents have been adapted for the South-East Asia Region.

The booklet is meant for use by health and health-related workers and all those involved and interested in understanding AIDS and helping people to live with AIDS in the community.

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WORLD HEALTH ORGANIZATION

Regional Office for South East Asia
NEW DELHI-INDIA

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HIV and AIDS

What this book is about

HIV is the **Human Immunodeficiency Virus**. This is the virus which causes people to get AIDS.

AIDS is the **Acquired Immunodeficiency Syndrome**, also called Slim in some countries. This book can help people understand how to



live the best they can with HIV infection and AIDS.

This book will help you to understand how you and other people feel about HIV and AIDS. It also provides practical information.

- ☐ For you
- ☐ For your family
- ☐ For your friends
- ☐ For your neighbours.

This information will help you to help yourself and other people. It will help you to live positively with HIV and AIDS.

You are not alone

Many people are worried about HIV and AIDS.

Many people have HIV.

Some people have AIDS and all with HIV infection may develop AIDS.

Many people have friends and relatives who have HIV or AIDS.



We all need to know what to do :

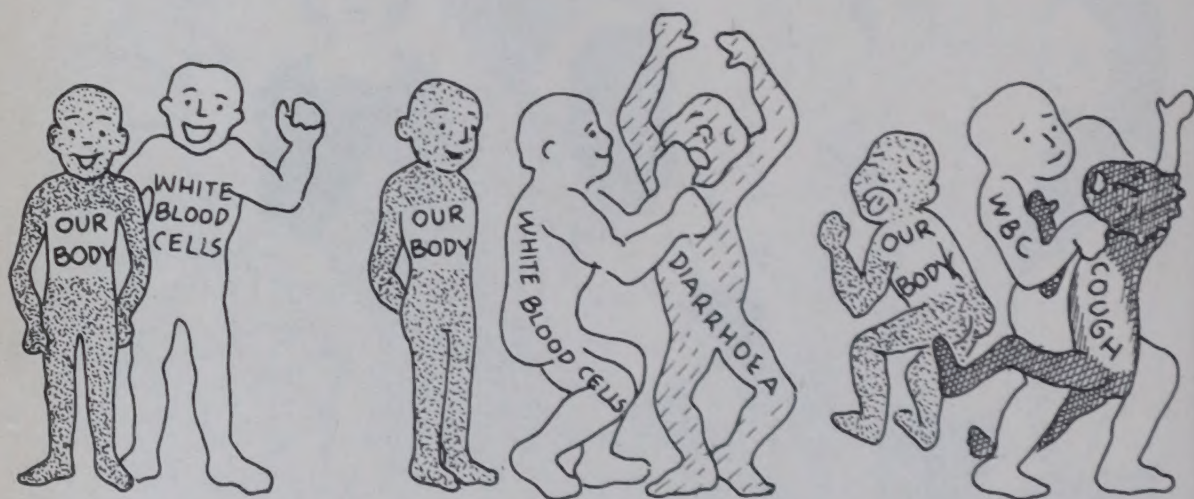
- ☐ To help ourselves, our families.
- ☐ To help others.

We are not alone

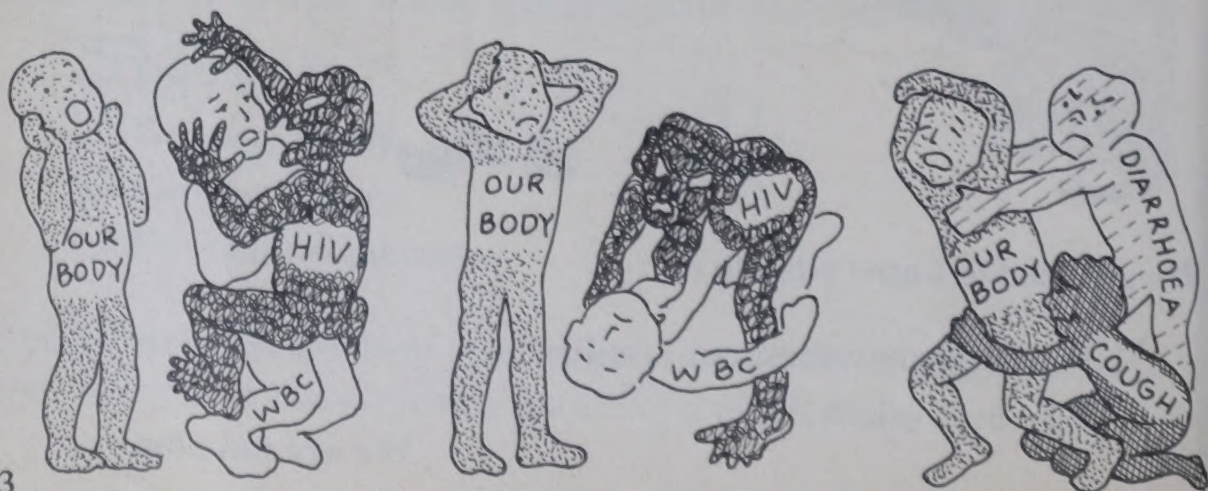
What is HIV and how does it make one sick ?

HIV is a very small germ called a virus. HIV makes the body weak and less able to fight sickness. People with HIV in their body go on to become sick with AIDS. The following is a simple way to understand what HIV does in the body :

Our body has white blood cells which fight against disease germs and kill them. Thus white blood cells protect us from falling sick.



When a person has HIV in the body, the virus destroys the white blood cells which then can no longer fight against disease germs. This makes the person sick.



How is HIV spread?

HIV is found in the blood and in the sexual fluids (semen in men, vaginal secretions in women). This means that HIV is spread in three main ways.

Sex

Most people get HIV by having unprotected sex with some one who already has HIV. A woman is many more times at risk of getting the HIV through sex.



Infected Blood

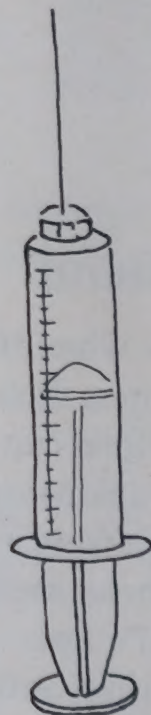
People get HIV when HIV-infected blood enters their blood. This infected blood can come from a blood transfusion. It can also come from a needle or blade that has been used on a person with HIV and not sterilized afterwards.



Sharing a needle without sterilizing particularly among those who inject drugs can spread HIV.

Traditional customs of circumcision or scarification with unsterilized needles or blades can spread HIV.

Sharing a common razor at the barber's shop carries some risk of spreading HIV



Mothers to Babies

Women with HIV can pass it to their babies. The baby becomes infected while in the mother's womb or as it is being born. There is also some risk of transmission through breast milk.



As soon as HIV enters your body, you become infectious, that is, you can infect other people with HIV.

How HIV is

You cannot give or get HIV by sharing food, touching, hugging, shaking hands, crying, sitting close to other people or holding other people in normal ways.



not spread

You cannot give or get HIV by sharing combs, sheets, towels or clothes. Sharing toilets or latrines is also safe.

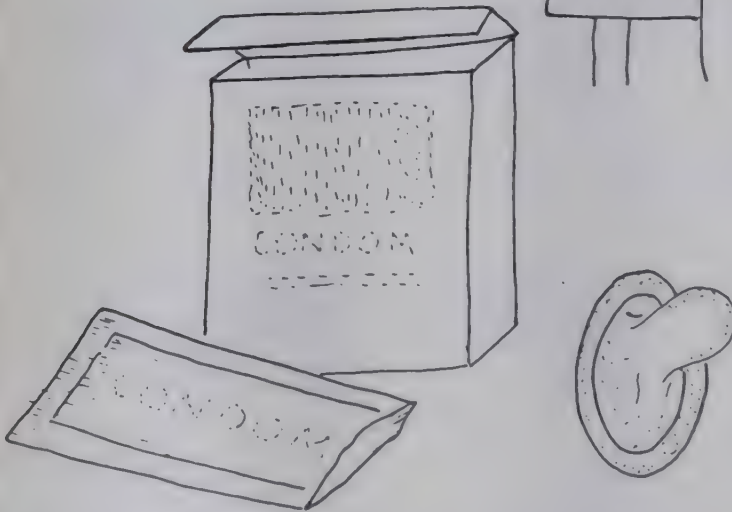


You cannot get HIV from mosquitos, bedbugs or any other insect or animal.



How HIV infection

1. Do not have sex until you get married, and once you are married then stay faithful to your partner.
2. If you know you are uninfected and are already sexually active, have sex only with a mutually faithful partner who is also known to be uninfected.
3. In all other situations a condom should always be used during sex.



4. Women with HIV should seek advice before getting pregnant because they may pass HIV to their babies. Pregnancy can be avoided by using condoms and/or other family planning methods.
5. Avoid the need for blood transfusions.
 - a. Seek proper medical treatment for malaria and hookworm before you become anaemic (have a shortage of blood).

can be prevented

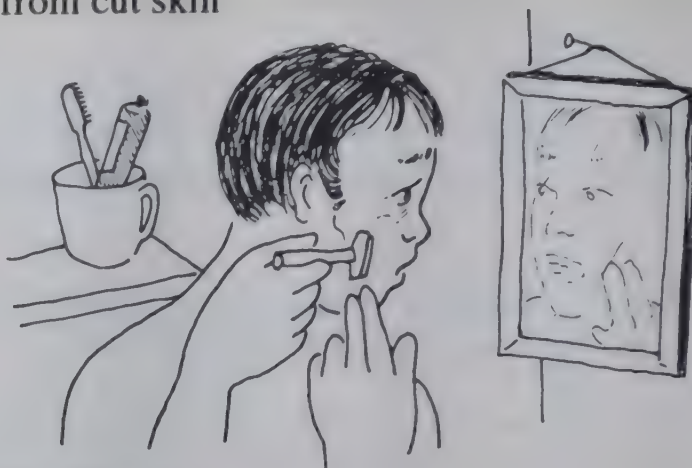
b. Repeated pregnancies at short intervals is an important cause of anaemia in women. Seek proper care during pregnancy and after delivery.

Adopt a family planning method to help you to have only the required number of babies at the right intervals.

6. When you cannot avoid a blood transfusion, insist on having blood which has been tested for HIV. It is safer when your relatives donate blood for you.
7. When you cannot avoid skin-piercing instruments such as blades, needles and syringes, insist on having sterilized instruments.



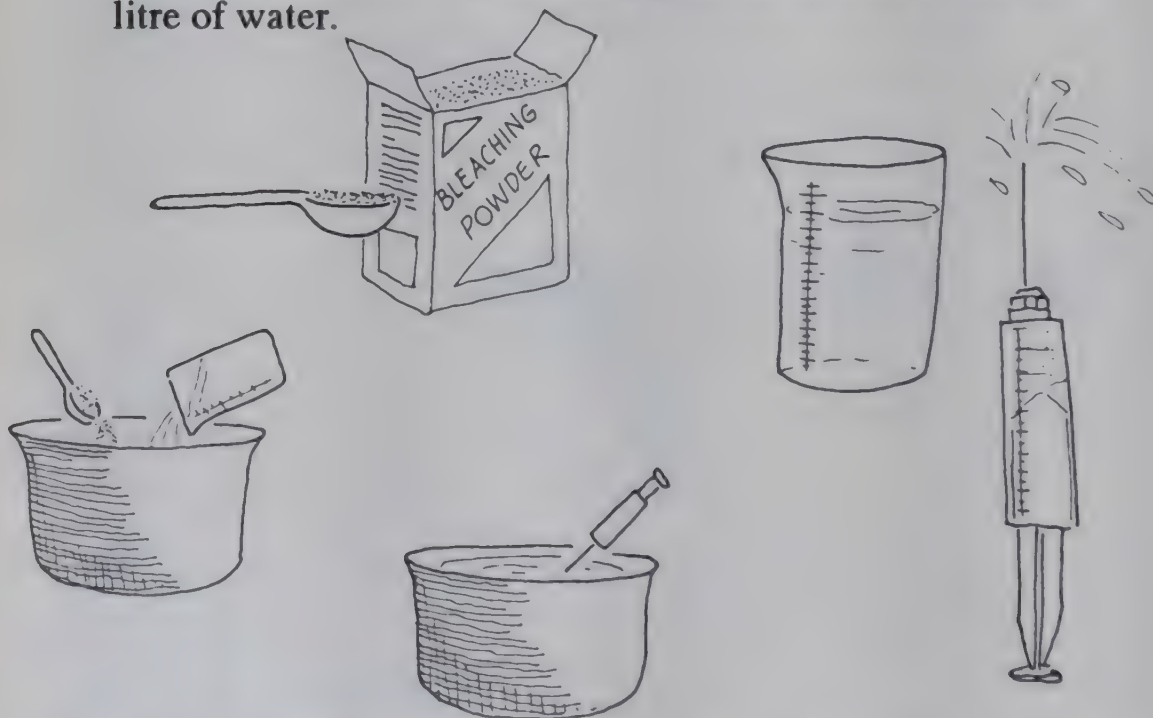
8. Don't share razor blades, because they might come into contact with blood from cut skin



9. Don't share needles.

If you cannot avoid sharing a needle, do one of the following :

- a) Rinse the syringe and the needle thoroughly using a 1% solution of bleaching powder. To prepare the solution, take one level teaspoon of bleaching powder and mix it in one litre of water.



- b) After rinsing the needle and syringe, boil it thoroughly for 20 minutes. Make sure that the needle and syringe are completely immersed in water.

10. Cover cuts and wounds with waterproof plasters. If you do not have plasters, use a piece of clean cloth to cover the wounds.



11. Women should be extra careful as they are more at risk of getting infected with HIV because of :
- a) greater chances of catching the infection during sexual intercourse,
 - b) greater chances of needing a blood transfusion because of bleeding associated with pregnancy and child birth.

The HIV test

Most people with HIV feel healthy. They don't know that they have HIV. If you are healthy, the only way to know if you have HIV is to have a special blood test.

If you take this blood test, you may be told that you are **HIV-positive**. This means that you have HIV in your blood.

If the test cannot find any sign of HIV in your blood, you will be told that you are **HIV-negative**. This does not mean that you do not have HIV in your blood as it takes time for presence of HIV to show in your blood. You can be fairly sure that you do not have HIV if you have avoided unprotected sex and have not been exposed to blood either through transfusion or unsterilized needles and syringes or other contaminated cutting or piercing instruments during the last three months.

If your test is negative it does not mean that you will be protected in the future, unless you follow the advice for HIV prevention.



When/Who should get the HIV test done

If you want an HIV test, discuss this with a health care worker who can tell you if it would be useful and if so where to go.

You might choose to get an HIV test :

- ☐ If you are concerned that you might be infected because :
 - a) You have had unprotected sex with unknown people, or individuals engaging in high risk behaviour
 - b) You had a blood transfusion
 - c) You have had injections with unsterilized needles or shared unsterilized needles or syringes.
- ☐ If your partner is infected

But remember, it is up to you alone to decide if you want an HIV test. No one else has the right to force you to take an HIV test if you are not ready to know the test result. This is why it is important to talk to someone before the test, and to make sure someone is there to talk to you after the test.

More about the HIV test

When you have an HIV test :

- ☐ A small amount of blood is taken from you
- ☐ The result usually takes at least two weeks to come
- ☐ The result is private (confidential)
- ☐ There should be someone there to help you to think about how you will cope with the result of the test.

If you are found to be negative following the test, people who gave you the HIV blood test can advise you whether you need to take the test more than once.

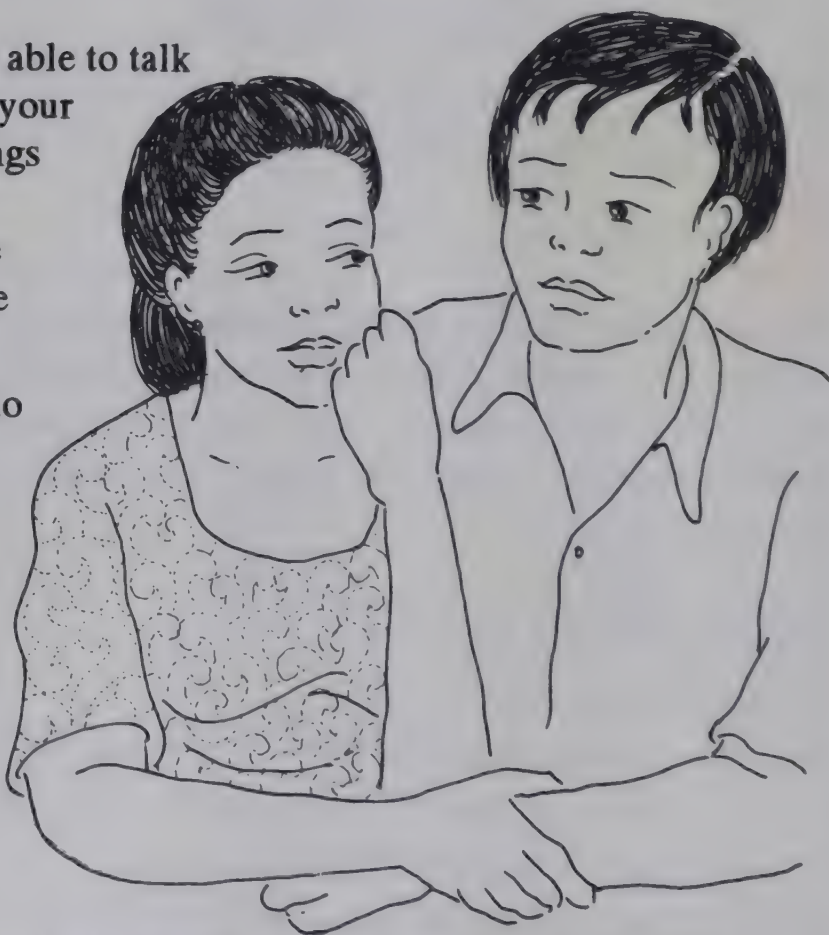
Important information for couples about the HIV test

It is possible for one partner to have HIV, while the other partner does not. This means that there is still time to protect the partner who is not infected.

So if you find out that you have HIV, your partner may also want to be tested.

It can be difficult to tell your partner that you have HIV. But it may be important because :

- You may then be able to talk more freely with your partner about things such as using condoms to make sexual intercourse safer
- You can openly do things to help yourself live longer
- Your partner will know better how to help you
- You will be able to plan for the future together.



If you are worried about telling your partner that you are infected with HIV, ask a health care worker or counsellor to help. With time your partner will be grateful that you told him or her.

What is AIDS?

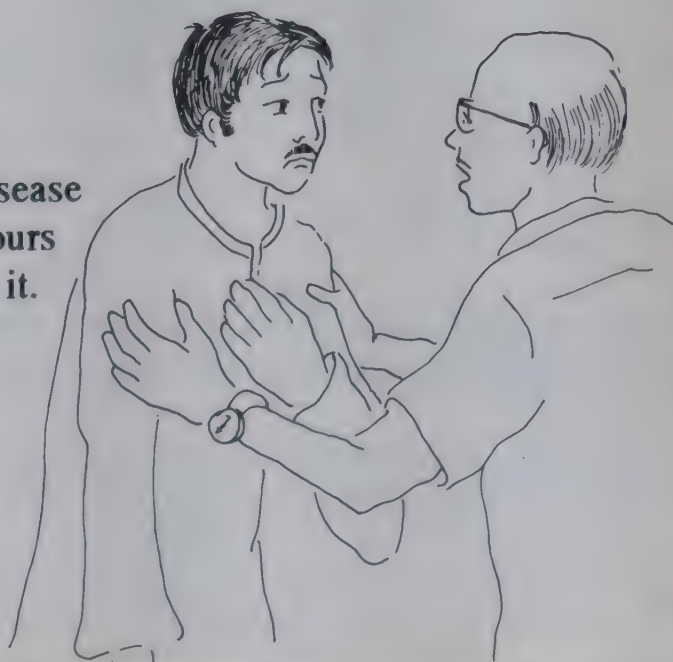
AIDS is the group of sicknesses that come after HIV has made the body weak. People with AIDS get sicknesses like fever, rash and diarrhoea. They also lose weight.

At the moment there is no known cure for AIDS. But people with AIDS and HIV should be comforted by the fact that there are medicines that can help them to fight off the sicknesses that come with HIV infection/AIDS. Antibiotics and other medicines can help people with AIDS to feel much better and to live longer.



AIDS is a new and serious disease so there have been false rumours and misunderstandings about it.

But AIDS is just a disease,
like cancer or polio.
It is not a curse or a
punishment.



HIV can progress to AIDS quickly or slowly

Some people develop AIDS a few years after becoming infected with HIV. Some people can be infected with HIV for 10 years or longer without developing AIDS. However, most people will not know when they became infected. They will only realize that they are infected when they become sick. It is believed that everyone who has HIV will eventually go on to develop AIDS.



It is now known that if you take care of your health, it can help you live for a longer time with HIV before you develop AIDS.

It is also known that if you look after your health, you have a greater chance of living longer after you have developed AIDS.

Later in this book we discuss how you can take care of your body and mind if you have HIV or AIDS.

Talking to someone about HIV and AIDS

People with HIV or AIDS need to talk to someone about how they are feeling. They also need information about what to expect and what they can do to help themselves.

There are many people to talk to. A religious leader can give spiritual comfort. Doctors, nurses and counsellors can give useful facts and support.



These people are trained to listen to your problems and experiences with HIV and AIDS. They can help you to understand your feelings, to sort out your problems and to make decisions for yourself, either individually or within your family or small group.



Feelings about

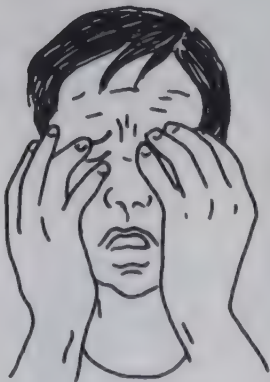
HIV and AIDS are new and serious problems. So it is natural for people to have strong feelings about them.

Most people are frightened of HIV and AIDS.

People who know that they have HIV or AIDS feel many different emotions. Some feel shocked. Some feel angry.



Shock



No matter how much you prepare it is a shock to learn that you have HIV or AIDS.

You may feel very confused and not know that to do. It is good to be with someone you trust at this time.

HIV and AIDS

The feelings of people with HIV or AIDS change often. One day they may feel rejected and lonely. The next day they may feel hopeful. This is normal.

On the following pages, you can read about some of the different feelings experienced by people with HIV or AIDS.



Denial



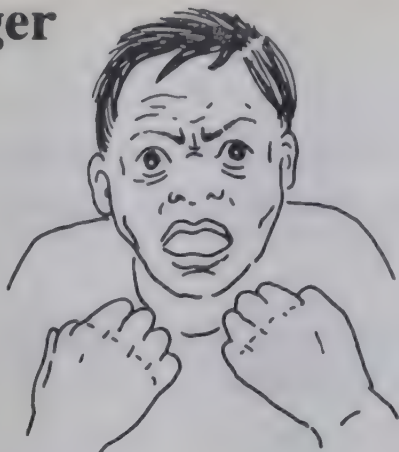
At first some people cannot believe that they have HIV or AIDS. They say :

“The doctor must be wrong”.

“It can’t be true, I feel so strong”.

If you have been told that you have HIV or AIDS, a counsellor/health worker can help you to understand what this means.

Anger



Some people get very angry when they find out that they have HIV or AIDS. They blame themselves or the person they think gave them HIV. Some may even blame God.

Anger is normal but it is not helpful. Talking to a counsellor/health worker or a friend can help you through the feeling of anger.

Revenge/spite

Some people want to take revenge when they find out that they have HIV/AIDS. They want to infect other people. People with HIV/AIDS need to be told that by infecting others out of spite will not cure them of their condition.



Bargaining

Some people try to bargain. They think:

“God will cure me if I stop having sex”.

“I will get cured if I have sex with a virgin or a child”.

“The ancestors will make me better if I slaughter an animal”.

People with HIV or AIDS need to be helped to get through the feeling of bargaining.



Loneliness

People with HIV or AIDS often feel lonely.



If you have HIV or AIDS, remember you are not alone. Many other people have HIV or AIDS.

If someone you know has HIV or AIDS, give them companionship. Take away their loneliness.

Fear

People with HIV or AIDS fear many things.

- ☐ Pain
- ☐ Losing their job
- ☐ Other people knowing that they are infected
- ☐ Leaving their children
- ☐ Death.



It is frightening to have HIV or AIDS, but you may find that your fear becomes less when you talk to someone who understands. You may also find that you are worried about things that you do not need to fear. For example, you may find that when other people learn you have HIV, they show you great love and kindness.



Self-consciousness



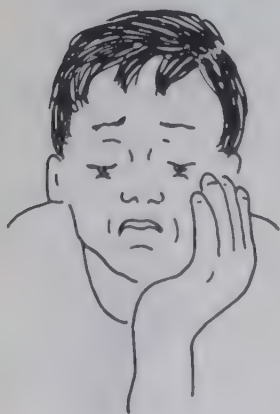
Some people with HIV or AIDS think everyone is looking at them or talking about them. This makes them want to hide.

Sometimes they feel rejected by other people, or they reject themselves. Sometimes they feel guilty.

If you have HIV or AIDS, don't hide. Try not to feel discouraged if people talk about you. Stay active in your community. By staying active, you can show the world that people with HIV and AIDS are valuable members of society, just like anyone else.

If you have HIV or AIDS try to think well of yourself. Be proud of yourself. **You are still you.** You are still important.

Depression



Some people with HIV or AIDS feel there is no good reason for living.

They feel useless. Sometimes they stay at home, not eating, not talking to anyone.

Depression can make you weak in mind and body. So it is important to try to overcome depression.

If you have HIV or AIDS, don't give up. Put on your nice clothes. Visit your friends. Keep busy. Do something that helps others. If you have children, think about them; they still need you. Health care workers may help if you feel very depressed. Do not hesitate to visit one if your depression is very deep or long-lasting.

Acceptance



After some time most people with HIV or AIDS accept their situation. This is helpful. They often feel more serene (peaceful in mind). They often feel able to begin to think about the best way to live. They think :

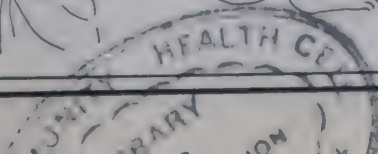
“What can I do to make the best of the rest of life”?

“What foods should I eat to help me stay healthy”?

“What plans shall I make so my children are provided for in the future?”



They might also think : “Let me be grateful for every day. Let me appreciate my friends and family.



Hope

People with HIV or AIDS can have hope about many things :



- ☐ hope that they will live a long time
- ☐ hope that scientists will find a cure
- ☐ hope that the doctor will be able to treat each sickness as it comes.
- ☐ hope because they are loved and accepted for who they are
- ☐ hope because of their belief in a life after death.



It is important to have hope. Hope lifts your spirits and gives you strength to face each situation. Hope can help you to fight HIV and AIDS and live longer.

Remember : Even if you have hope today, it is possible to feel angry or depressed tomorrow. This is normal. The important thing is to try to regain the feelings of hope again and again.

Living positively with HIV and AIDS

Hope and acceptance can help you to **live positively** with HIV and AIDS.

But what does living positively mean?



In the following pages, you can read about how families, friends and neighbours can help people with HIV or AIDS to live positively.

The importance

Families are very important for people with HIV or AIDS. The family home can be a shelter :

- Where someone can rest assured that they are loved and accepted
- Where they don't have to be brave or hide their feelings.



If someone in your family has HIV or AIDS, you can help them in many ways

- You can help them to rest by doing their household jobs for them
- You can help them to eat nutritious food by going to the market and cooking for them
- You can help to dispel their fear by making them feel loved



of the family

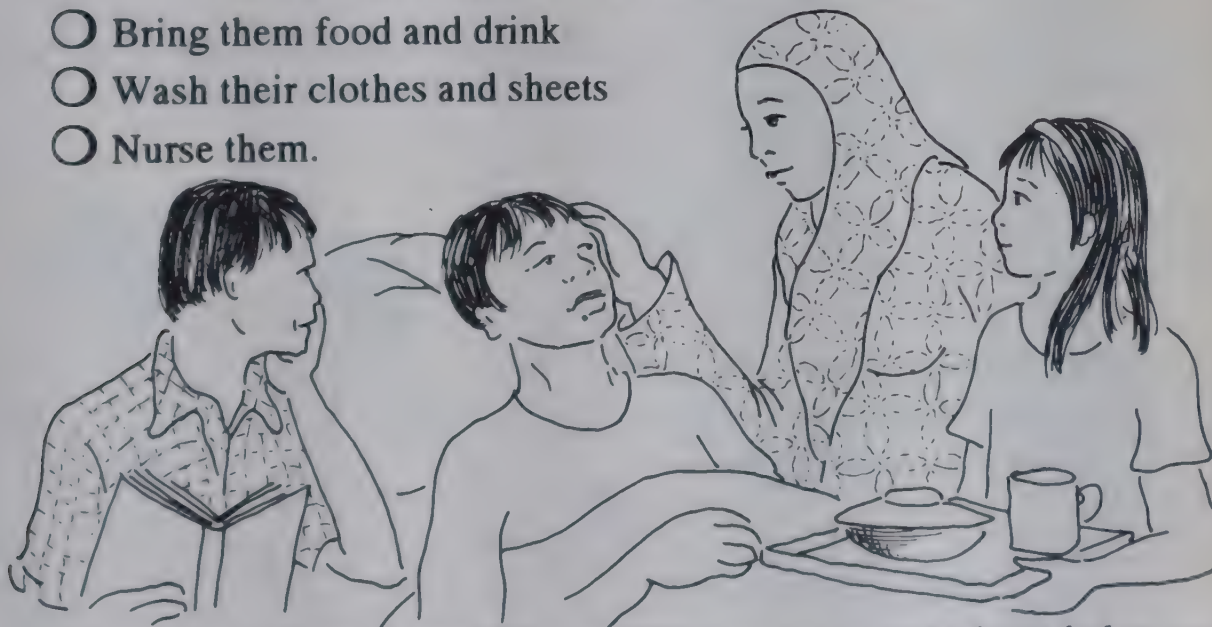
If you have HIV or AIDS, it is usually good for your family to know about it.

- ☐ They can give you love and support
- ☐ You can make plans for the future
- ☐ They can share the financial burden
- ☐ It will be easier for you if you do not to hide your situation



If someone in your family is sick with AIDS you can :

- ☐ Bring them food and drink
- ☐ Wash their clothes and sheets
- ☐ Nurse them.



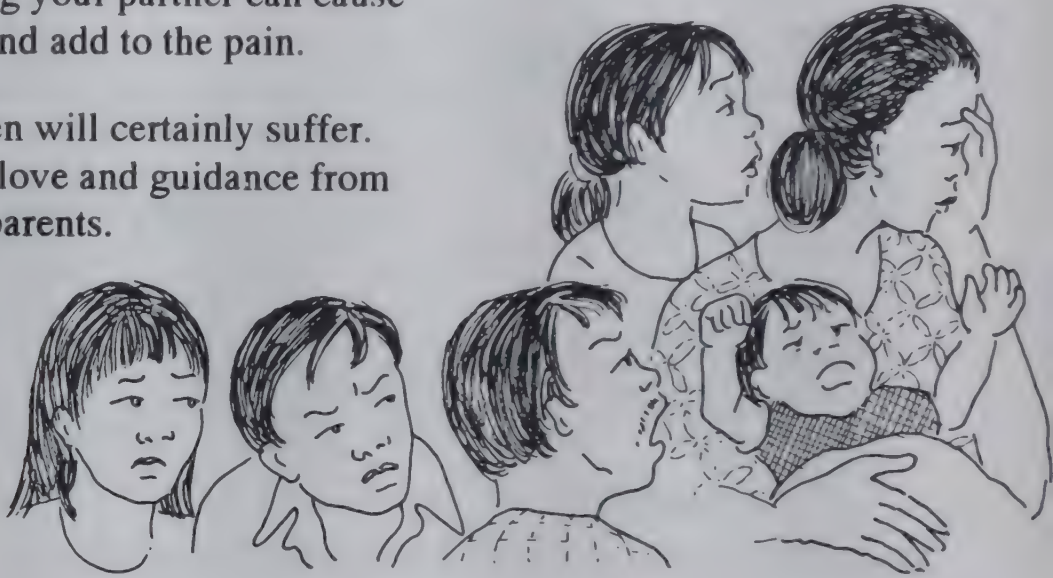
Remember : If you have HIV or AIDS, you can use the knowledge you have to help others. You can teach your family how HIV is spread, and how it is not spread. You can help them to avoid HIV infection. This is one of the most loving contributions you can make.

Don't let HIV or AIDS

Sometimes when a husband knows his wife has HIV or AIDS, he sends her away from the home. Sometimes it is the wife who abandons the husband with HIV or AIDS.

Abandoning your partner can cause problems and add to the pain.

The children will certainly suffer. They need love and guidance from both their parents.



Such separation can spread HIV. For example, the husband may also have HIV. But he will want to take a new wife. The new wife may then become infected with HIV.

It is better to stay together and work out the future together.

Sometimes families argue about who is to blame for bringing HIV into a marriage. This can cause great unhappiness.

It can make it difficult for the family to plan for the future.

It can make it difficult to live positively.



divide your family

Some people believe that the person who falls sick first is the one who got infected first. **This is not always true.**



Of course, it is natural to think about who brought the infection. But thinking or talking about it too much will cause more pain. It is more helpful:

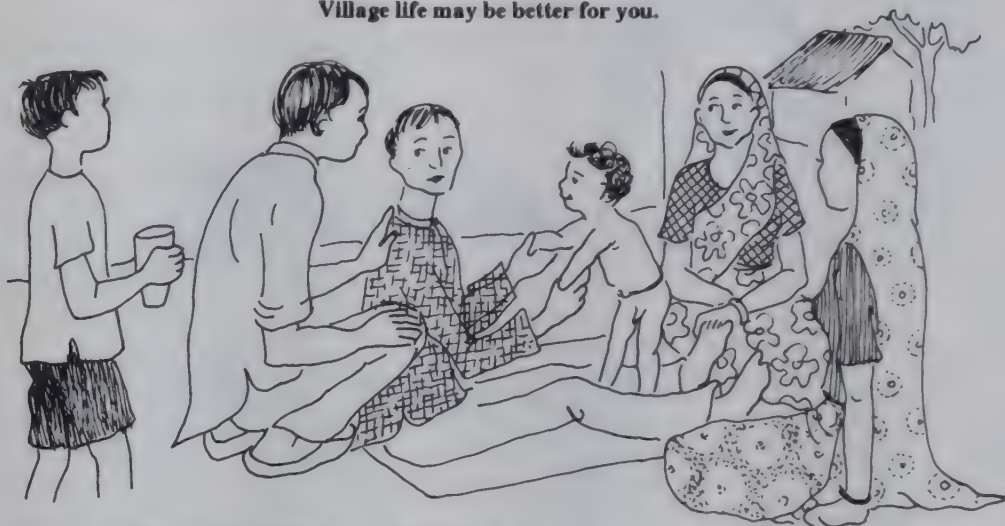
- ☐ To forgive
- ☐ To support each other
- ☐ To plan for the future by making a will to provide for your children and partner
- ☐ To care for your children
- ☐ To enjoy the remaining days together.



Going back to

Some people with HIV or AIDS want to go back to the village. They may find better food there. Their extended family may be able to give them more attention than they would receive in town.

Village life may be better for you.



But some people with HIV or AIDS do not want to go back to the village. Their village relatives may be very poor. They may be neglected.

But for some people, village life may be worse.



People with HIV or AIDS should be allowed to decide for themselves about returning to the village. It is better if it is their choice and not the choice of their elders, parents or partner.

the village

Remember : People with HIV or AIDS need medical treatment to feel better and live longer. Is there a doctor or medicine in the village? This should be one of the important considerations while deciding on where to stay.

Town life may be very poor for some people.



Husbands or other relatives who remain in town can still support a family member who returns to the village. They can send money and medicine. They can visit.

But town life may be better for others.



If a wife goes back to the village, she should take the things that belong to her and that she bought with the money she earned in town. It is her right to keep her property.

Friends

If you have a friend who has HIV or AIDS, you should be supportive and kind.

You can learn from your friend.
Your friendship can even grow.

You can also help your friend to live positively. You can meet your friend at a place where you can drink tea or soda, not alcohol. You can go to dances and sports and other events together.

If you have HIV or AIDS, friends can make your worries seem smaller. They can give you moral support.



And remember, if you have HIV or AIDS, your friends still need you. Don't cut yourself off from your friends. You are still worthy of friendship. **You are still the same person.**



If friends seem to reject you, try not to feel hurt. It may be that they are not rejecting you. You may be imagining it and worrying for nothing. It may be that they don't know what to say.

They may also be ignorant.

Or they may fear that they also have HIV.

Like anyone else, people with HIV or AIDS can make new friends. Often they like to make friends with other people with HIV or AIDS. They find them more understanding about the frustrations and challenges. If you have HIV or AIDS, you may find new friends at AIDS support groups, or you can start a group.

Neighbours

Neighbours can help a family that is affected by AIDS.

What can we do?

We can:

- ☐ Collect water
- ☐ Go to the market
- ☐ Cook food
- ☐ Care for the children
- ☐ Help in the garden
- ☐ Sweep the compound
- ☐ Wash clothes

We can also simply spend time with the family. Often this is the most important thing you can do. Our concern will help them to feel that they are still part and parcel of our community.



Community Care

Women's clubs and youth and religious groups can also mobilize to assist, as well as local political and social organizations.



It is good if a community feels free to talk about AIDS, just as it talks about any other sickness. Then the people who want to gossip in an unkind way will find themselves isolated and with nothing to say.

Remember : *"Today it is me, tomorrow someone else"* (Philly Bongeley Lutaaya, popular Ugandan song writer, who died of AIDS).

Community organizations should organize:

- Educational sessions on how HIV infection is spread
- How HIV is not spread, how to help support individuals/families affected with HIV infection/AIDS
- Organize various types of assistance to individuals/families affected with HIV infection/AIDS by arranging for :
 - a) financial assistance
 - b) food
 - c) spiritual care

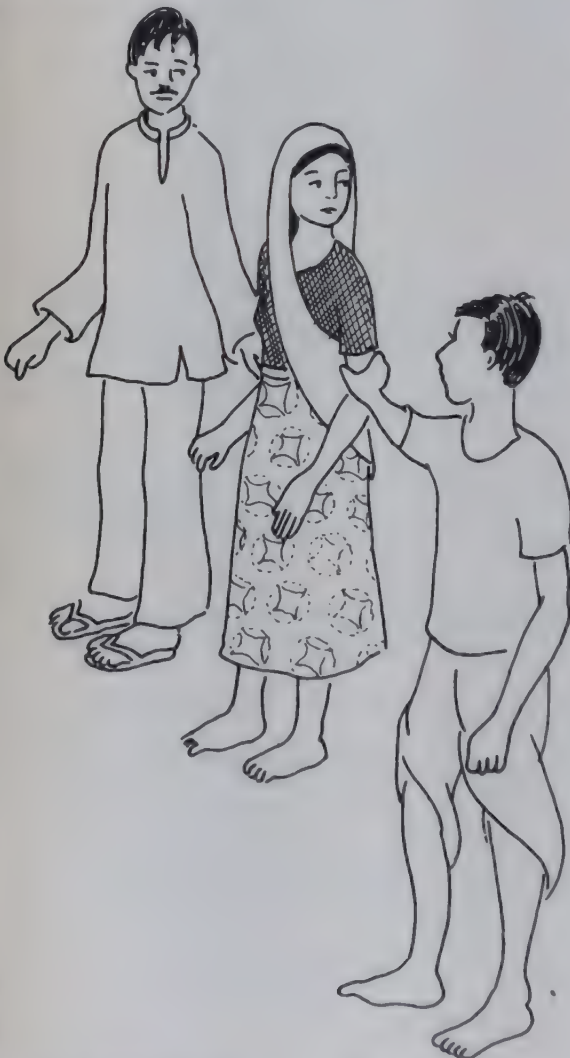
- d) medical care
- e) ambulance/transport for medical care
- f) care and support of children affected with HIV' infection/AIDS as well as healthy children and orphans.

Some traditional customs

Some traditional customs are now risky because of HIV. Customs which involve having non-regular sexual partners are risky. Any custom which involves sharing cutting instruments is also risky.

Risky customs include :

Wife-sharing and wife inheritance.



Circumcision with unsterilized knives or blades.

Scarification with unsterilized knives or blades.



You cannot know who has HIV. HIV is found both in villages and towns. So it is much safer to modify dangerous practices in order to make customs safe.

which can spread HIV

Wife inheritance is a custom that has become dangerous because of HIV.

If you are a man and your brother dies, your family may want you to take his wife as your second wife. Whether your brother died of AIDS or in an accident, this is risky for everyone. You cannot know who has HIV.

- ☐ You may have HIV.
- ☐ Your brother's wife may have HIV.
- ☐ Your wife may have HIV.

You may infect each other. Future children produced by you and your wife, and by you and your brother's wife, may also have HIV.



You can assist your brother's wife without marrying her. She can remain in her late husband's house and use his property to start a small business. She can dig on family land.

But for you and your wife and your brother's wife to be safe from HIV, you should all refuse the custom of wife inheritance. It is always best to stick to one faithful, permanent sexual partner.

Caring for yourself if



Caring for yourself is

you have HIV or AIDS



FAMILY
PLANNING
CLINIC



part of living positively

Getting

If you have HIV or AIDS, your resistance to infection is weakened.
You will fall sick more easily.

It is very important to go to the doctor as soon as you feel sick.
Most of the sicknesses that come with HIV or AIDS can be treated.
Getting prompt treatment will help you to live longer.



For most problems, doctors can give you medicine that will:

- ☐ Make you feel better
- ☐ Stop the problem becoming more serious

medical help

So, if you have a cold or cough, go to the doctor. Don't let it develop into something serious like pneumonia or tuberculosis. And if you have a cut, cover it and seek treatment. Don't let it become infected.



It is important to get treatment from qualified health workers. You can get treatment from your usual doctor. You can also go to a clinic or hospital.



If someone you love has AIDS and seems to be getting weak, don't despair. Encourage them to go to the doctor. Treatment can make them much more comfortable and give them a feeling of well-being.

Eating and drinking

Your body needs food to build it up, to give it energy and to protect it from infection.



You should try to eat even when you do not feel hungry. You can take small meals and eat them more often.

If solid food is difficult to eat, make it into a liquid form.

Eat what you can tolerate. Drink milk or juice instead of alcohol.

You may have sores in your mouth which stop you from eating. Mouth sores can be treated, so take liquid food and go to see a doctor.

If you have diarrhoea

You should take increased amounts of fluid with your normal food.

Drink plenty of water. It is the most widely available home fluid.

You should also take other fluids that may be readily available in the household such as:

- ☐ Water in which rice or a cereal has been cooked
- ☐ Weak sweetened tea
- ☐ Barley water
- ☐ Coconut water

ORS You can also take ORS to treat diarrhoea and prevent dehydration. Prepare the ORS according to instructions given in the packet and take in amounts recommended.

Most commonly available fluids including plain water are adequate in most episodes of diarrhoea when given in increased amounts together with food which should also contain normal amounts of salt. Drink one full cup or more every time you pass watery stools.

Nutritious food

You should try to eat food from each of the following three groups at every meal. This does not have to be expensive. You can choose the cheapest food from each group. It will still be very nutritious. If you are able, try to grow a little food, or raise a few chickens at home.

1. Body-building foods: peas, beans, soya, lentils, groundnuts (peanuts) eggs, meat, fish, milk.



2. Energy-giving foods: potatoes, rice, millet, maize, casava, bread, etc.



3. Foods that protect the body from infection (vitamins): all fruits and vegetables, especially green leafy vegetables.



Cigarettes and alcohol are harmful

It is harmful for anyone to smoke. Smoking damages the lungs and many other parts of the body and makes it easier for infection to enter.



Drinking too much alcohol also hurts the body especially the liver. Just as important, alcohol can make you disorganized and forgetful. You may forget to have safer sex. Remember, even if you have HIV now, it is possible to get other sexually transmitted diseases which will make your body weak.



Cigarettes and alcohol are expensive. You could spend your money better on milk, eggs, beans and other nutritious foods. Good food strengthens your body and will help you to live longer.

Rest and relaxation

Your body needs extra rest. Try to sleep for eight hours every night. Rest on weekends and whenever you are tired.



It is also good to relax. You can listen to music, or read a newspaper or a novel, the holy works or other favourite books.



You can relax with the people you love. You can spend time relaxing with your children.

Work

It is good to work for as long as you can. Work earns money. It keeps you active. You see friends and colleagues at work. Being around them and working helps you to forget your worries.



If you start to feel too tired to do your normal duties, think about finding another job that is less demanding. Or you can try to work less. Ask your employer if you can reduce your hours at work or work half days..



Message to employers:
if one of your staff has
HIV or AIDS be understanding.
They can still do valuable work.

Safer sexual intercourse

HIV is transmitted through sex. So the only way to be absolutely sure that you are not going to infect someone else is by not having sexual intercourse. If you already have HIV it is risky for you to be exposed to other sexually transmitted diseases.

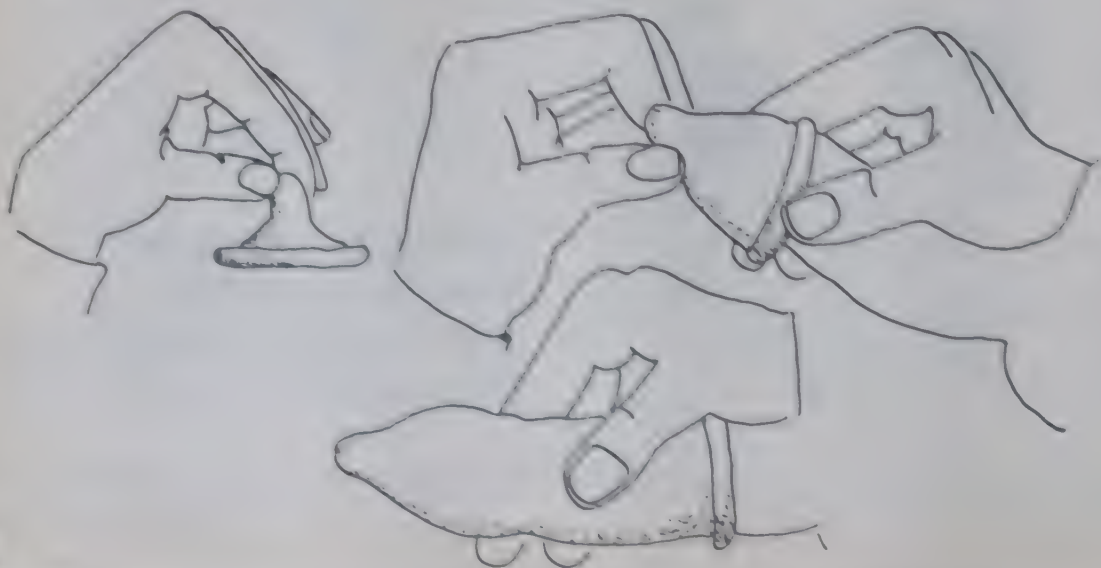
But it can be difficult to give up sex. So what can people with HIV or AIDS do?

They can use a condom every time they have sex. Condoms used correctly can reduce the risk of passing on HIV or getting other sexually transmitted diseases.

It is very important to use the condom correctly. If you do not know how, ask a health worker or a counsellor.

Correct use of condoms.

1. Tear the foil wrapper and take out the condom.
2. Hold the end portion of the condom between the thumb and the forefinger to expel air.
3. Unroll the condom carefully over the full length of the erect male organ.



4. While withdrawing after intercourse, hold condom firmly with the fingers on the male organ to avoid spilling of semen.
5. Each condom should be used once only.
6. Used condoms should not be thrown about indiscriminately, but these should be wrapped in paper and thrown with the household trash.

If you decide to use condoms, you will need to discuss it with your partner first. Do not force the other person to do what you want. It is better to discuss the risks and advantages together.

You can buy condoms in pharmacies and other shops. Often clinics also distribute condoms.



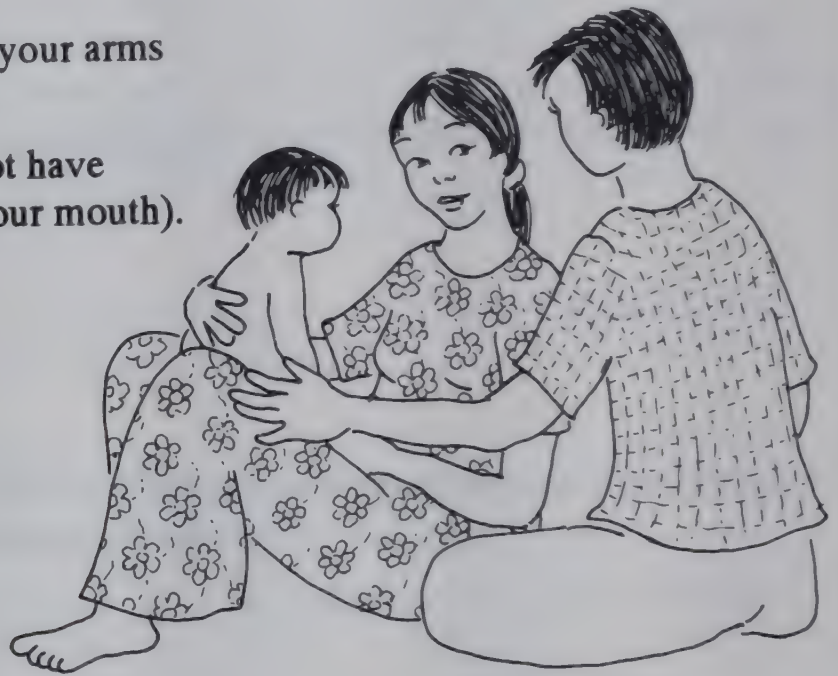
Remember: If you have another sexually transmitted disease, you should seek treatment immediately.

Other ways to show love

Sexual intercourse is not the only way to show love and to be intimate.

If you have HIV or AIDS, it is safe to;

- ☐ Hug
- ☐ Hold someone in your arms
- ☐ Touch
- ☐ Kiss (if you do not have cuts or sores in your mouth).



You can also think about other ways of showing love, you can:

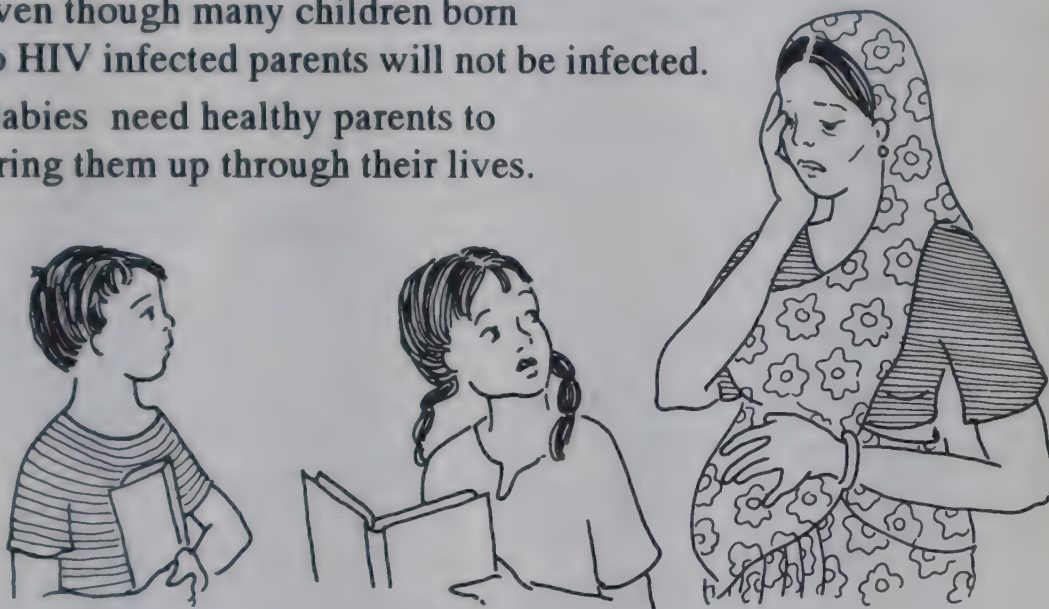
- ☐ Help your partner
- ☐ Remember the special things that he\she likes
- ☐ Listen to what he\she says
- ☐ Spend time together
- ☐ Comfort and console each other.



Pregnancy

If you have HIV or AIDS, you should seek advice from your health care worker before deciding if you want to become pregnant.

- Your baby may be born with HIV, even though many children born to HIV infected parents will not be infected.
- Babies need healthy parents to bring them up through their lives.



Some husbands get angry with their wives if they don't produce children. Some leave their wives.

But an understanding spouse will help their partner to make decisions regarding pregnancy if either one has HIV or AIDS. They will want to stay healthy for as long as possible. They will not want the sadness of being the parents of a baby with HIV or AIDS.

Often health care workers, counsellors or relatives can be helpful in discussing the issues surrounding pregnancy and HIV infection, and can help you to come to a decision that is right for you.



Children with HIV or AIDS.

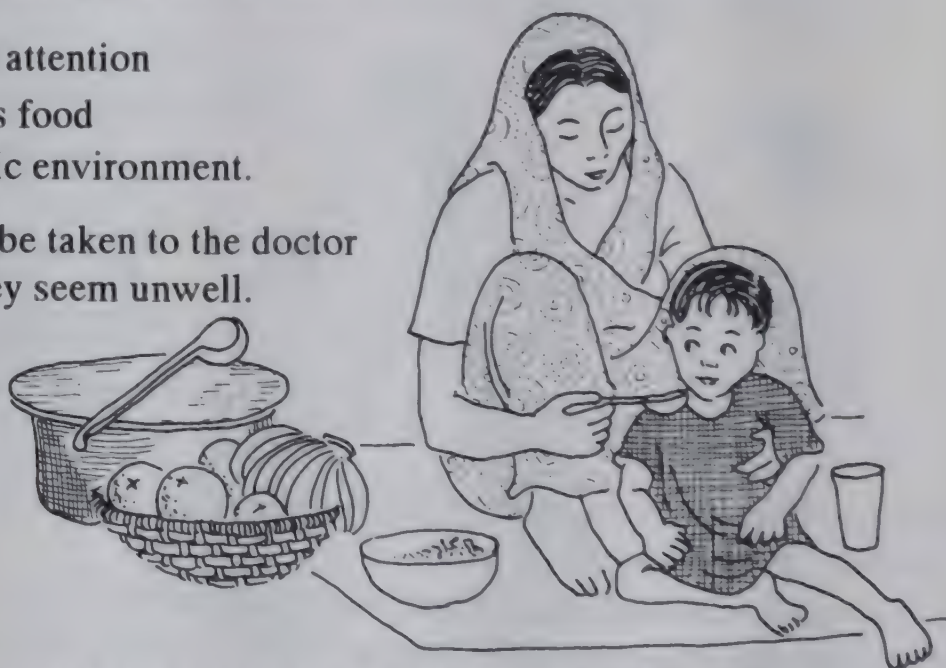
Most children with HIV become infected when they are still in their mother's womb or as they are being born. However, in the first year of a child's life the commonly available tests cannot tell if an HIV infection has been passed on or not. Most babies with HIV develop AIDS before the age of two. But some can remain healthy up to the age of six.

Some children may get infected through blood transfusion.

Children with HIV or AIDS need:

- Love and attention
- Nutritious food
- A hygienic environment.

They should be taken to the doctor whenever they seem unwell.



It is completely safe to hold or hug a child with HIV or AIDS. HIV cannot be spread by children's urine, saliva, faeces or vomit. A child with HIV cannot infect others by playing with them or sharing toys.

Children with HIV should be encouraged to go to school and should not be discriminated.



Breast-feeding

Breast milk is almost always the best food for babies. It is the baby's best protection against diarrhoea and many other diseases.

Breast-feeding is recommended even if the mother or the baby or both have HIV, unless the health worker gives special reasons not to do so. Women who know they are HIV - infected should consult their health care worker for advice about feeding their babies.



Immunization

Immunization is very important. HIV infected children should be immunized against diphtheria, pertussis, tetanus, poliomyelitis, measles and tuberculosis. However, children with AIDS should not be immunized with BCG.



Children in the family

Parents with HIV or AIDS may have several healthy children.

These can be children who were born before the mother became infected with HIV. Or they can be children who were born after the mother became infected with HIV but who did not become infected themselves.



These healthy children need a lot of love. One or both of their parents will eventually die. They will become orphans.



affected by HIV or AIDS

Parents with HIV or AIDS can help their healthy children by:

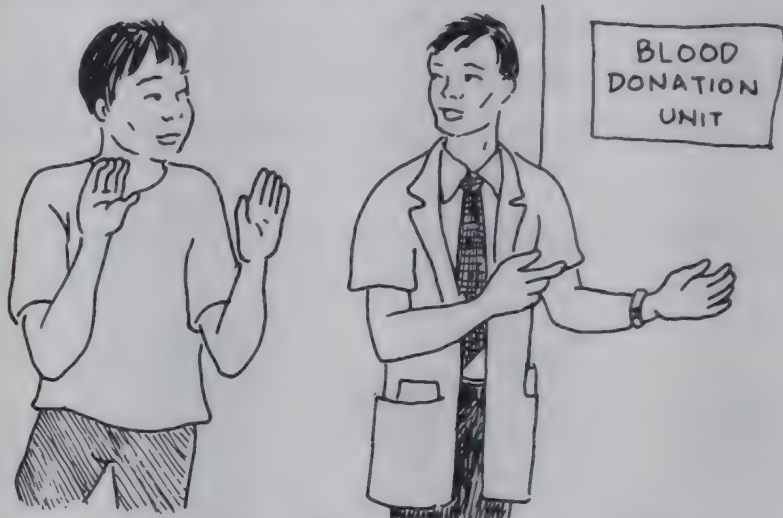
- ☐ Spending time with them and giving them care and guidance
- ☐ Making a will
- ☐ Making arrangements for relatives to look after them in the future
- ☐ Making arrangements for the future payment of school fees, if possible
- ☐ Protecting their family and property for their children.



Relatives and other concerned people in the community need to mobilize to help children who are orphaned by AIDS. Various social, religious and health organizations can help but they cannot take on the whole responsibility.

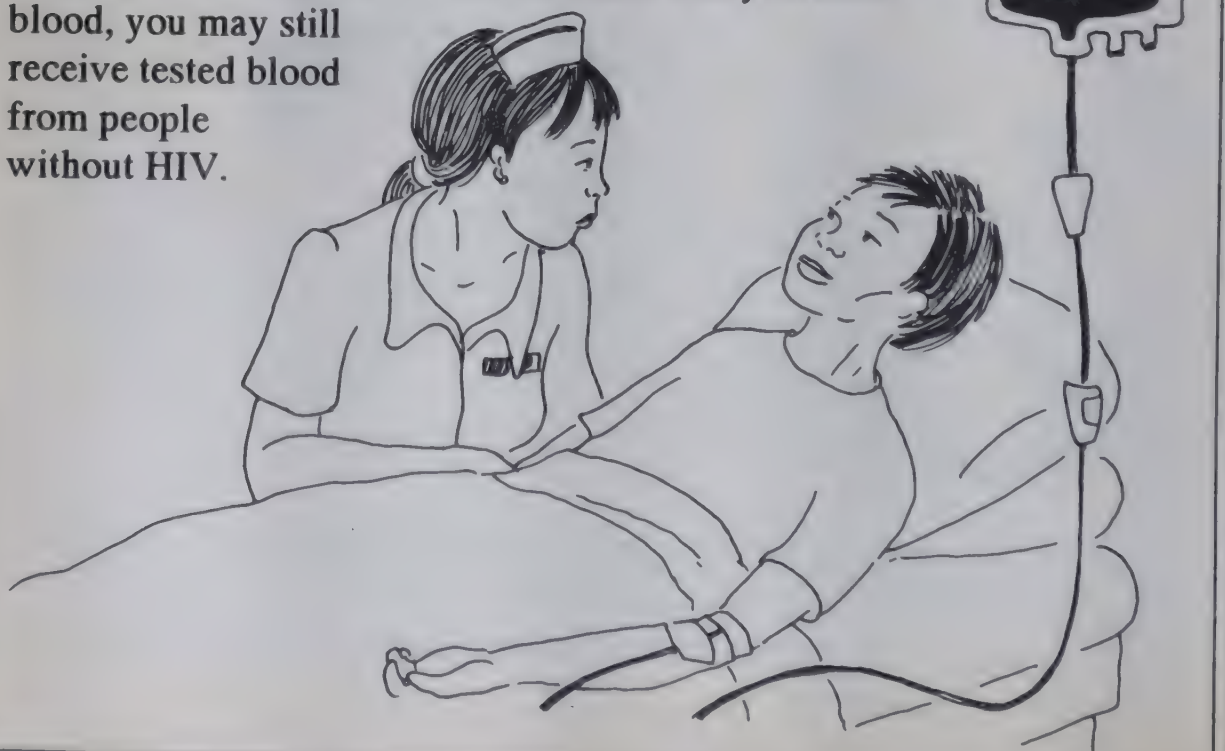
Blood transfusions

People should know that they cannot get HIV by donating blood. But if you know that you have HIV, you should not donate (give) blood. This is because your blood will be tested and then rejected.



When you cannot avoid a blood transfusion, insist on having blood which has been tested for HIV. Insist that your relatives donate blood for you.

But if you have HIV infection or AIDS and you need blood, you may still receive tested blood from people without HIV.



Herbalism\traditional medicine

Some people with HIV or AIDS believe that herbs help against some of the sicknesses that come with AIDS. For example, some people say that herbs can help against itching and coughing.

But as yet there is no herb that can cure AIDS.



Some herbs are very expensive. It may be better to spend your money on nutritious food and other useful things.

Remember: Some traditional doctors do not sterilize the blades they use for cutting. This can transmit HIV.

Witchcraft

HIV and AIDS are not caused by a spell or a curse. So there is no witchcraft that can cure them.

Witchcraft can be expensive. It can waste your money while not helping you at all.

Protecting yourself

HIV is spread through blood and sexual fluids.

If you have HIV or AIDS, you do not have to worry that you will infect your family in the course of daily life.



But to protect yourself and others, there are certain precautions you should take.

- Protect yourself from germs, which can cause other diseases, by maintaining good hygiene in the house.



and others

- Cover any cuts or wounds you might have. The people who assist you in your physical care should also cover any cuts or wounds they might have.



Be careful if you are bleeding or if there are any bloodstained clothes. Sheets, cloths used during menstrual bleeding or any other items with fresh blood on them should be washed with plenty of soap and water and hung to dry. The HIV germ cannot survive exposure to sunshine or dryness.



Spiritual

Many people with HIV or AIDS get great strength from spiritual beliefs, counselling and care. They realize that in their struggle they are not alone. They find that their fears are diminished.



People with HIV or AIDS should feel free to go to their religious leaders. All religions have special prayers and ceremonies for people who are sick. Your religious leader can help you to cope with many of the problems posed by HIV and AIDS.

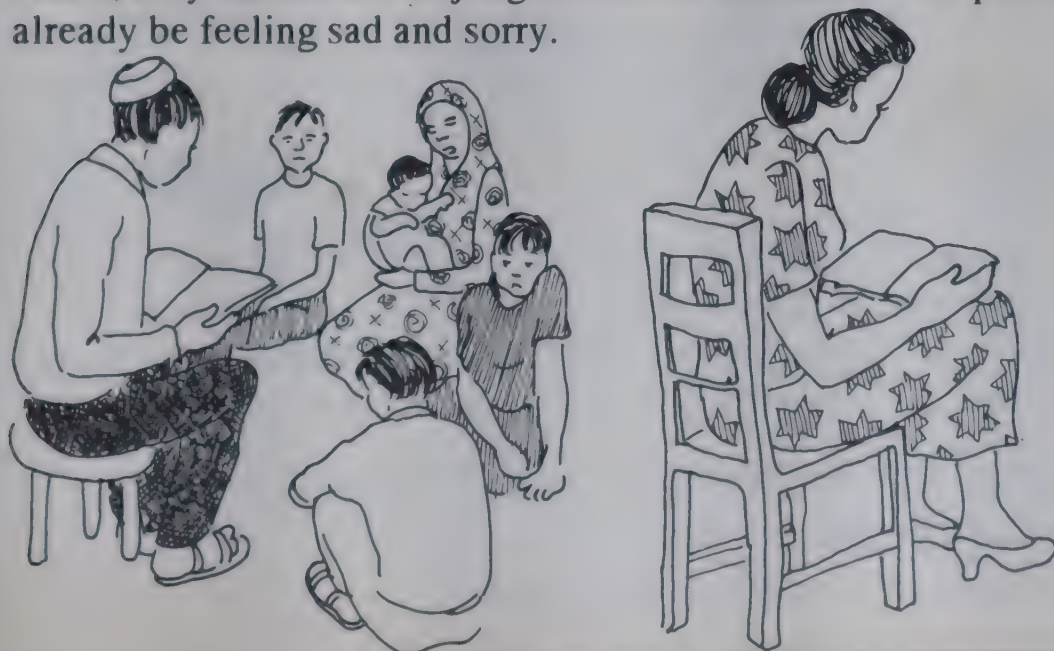


Care

Religious support can strengthen your spiritual beliefs and can help you to accept yourself and others. It can help you to get rid of bad feelings and to live positively.



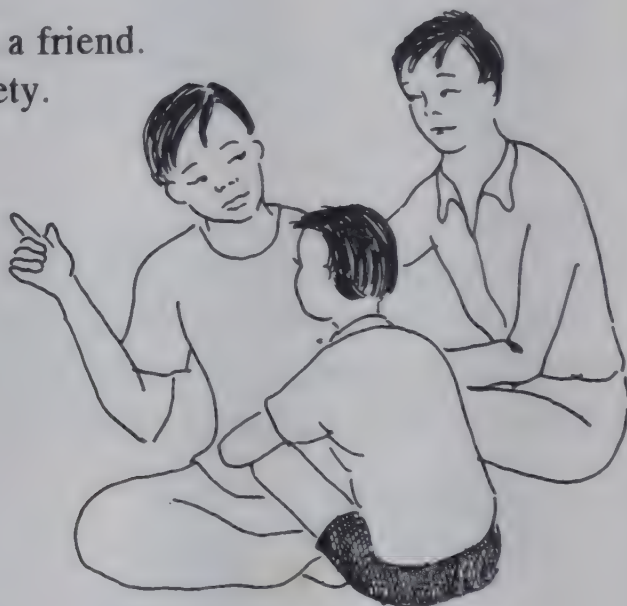
Religious leaders should be approachable and open to people with HIV or AIDS. They should give them hope and encouragement to rise above their problems. When they counsel a person with HIV or AIDS, they should not be judgemental or moralistic. The person will already be feeling sad and sorry.



Some people find that religious writings can be a great comfort. They are helped by reading the holy books and find that they get personal messages which encourage them. If you are lonely or sick, you can take out these books and read passages that are meaningful to you.



It can also be helpful to pray with a friend.
You can share your fear and anxiety.



Spiritual care helps people with HIV or AIDS to face the trials of sickness. It also helps them to prepare for death.
Often it is the fear of the unknown that makes us frightened to die.
But your spiritual beliefs can help you to overcome such fear.

It is important to prepare for death. You will feel much better:

- ☐ if you put your affairs in order
- ☐ if you settle old disputes by making peace.

Death is for everybody. It is part of being human.



We all have to die one day. But how we die is important. It is very good to die in dignity surrounded by people who love you. If you accept death in serenity, your courage can transform the lives of those you leave behind.



Living Positively

At the end of this book, we hope you will have found something in it to help you **LIVE POSITIVELY**.



Try every day to make the best of your life.
Remember you are not alone.



A Book to Help People Make the Best of **LIFE**



This book will help you to understand how you and other people feel about HIV and AIDS. It also provides practical information:

- ☐ *For you*
- ☐ *For your family*
- ☐ *For your friends*
- ☐ *For your neighbours*

*This information will help you to help yourself and other people.
It will help you to live positively with HIV and AIDS.*

Freedom Foundation -

HIV/AIDS -

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